

Operational Review of the Nassau County Police Department Emergency Ambulance Bureau						
Issue Date: January 13, 2006				Audit Period:		2004-2005
Audit Rec #	Recommendation	Implementation (note department's intention to implement the recommendation by an "A" for Recommendation Accepted or an "R" for Recommendation Rejected)	Target Imp. Date	Department Comments (including reason(s) for rejecting recommendation: failure to implement or implementation dates in excess of 90 days from due date of CAP)	Amended Target Imp. Date (comments required)	Comments
1	The Bureau should:					
	a. take steps to establish protocols regarding the maximum call receipt interval as required by state law and conform to all of the rules and regulations issued by the New York State Department of Health;					
	b. produce management reports and use them to monitor call receipt intervals and response times to ensure that they are within acceptable levels;					
Auditor's Follow Up Response	<i>b) _We recommend that the department give a high priority to the completion of its "spread sheet" program so that the response times can be calculated and monitored by management.</i>					
	c. consider using laptop computers or handheld personal data assistants (PDA) to enter the PCR information. This would enable management to compile data on response time as well as generate other types of reports desired by management.					
2	The Bureau should consider installation of AVL technology in its ambulances. This will assist the Bureau in monitoring the location of its ambulances and will be a useful management tool. The police department would be required to upgrade its CAD system as part of the implementation of the AVL technology.					
Auditor's Follow Up Response	<i>AVL does not necessarily require the use of a laptop and could be installed in the ambulances without waiting for the purchase of laptops that will be used for mobile data entry (as discussed in Finding #1).</i>					
3	1. The Bureau should do a cost-benefit analysis to determine optimal staffing so that a proper balance between adding staff and incurring overtime can be achieved, without compromising public safety.					
Auditor's Follow Up Response	<i>The 2006 budget passed by the county legislature and signed by the County Executive includes \$250,000 for the engagement of an independent, outside consultant to study police staffing. We understand that a request for proposals has already been issued, and that it does not include the Bureau's staffing. We recommend that the Bureau and the administration negotiate the inclusion of the Bureau's staffing requirements in this study. It is important for an outside consultant to reexamine appropriate staffing levels in the county police department, including the Emergency Ambulance Bureau, and the cost-benefits, and adequacy and appropriateness of using overtime versus hiring additional personnel to meet staffing requirements.</i>					
3	2. If the Bureau determines it is cost effective to hire more employees, it should request approval to do so.					
	3. The Bureau should maintain statistics on ambulance response time to be able to ensure that the practice of not staffing certain ambulances during periods of perceived decreased need does not compromise public safety.					
4	1. The county should:					
	a) establish a reasonable payment plan for those patients that are uninsured; and					

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4	b) work with the Long Island Council of Hospitals to facilitate a <i>Business Associates Agreement</i> .					
	2. The Bureau should become a participating provider for all the major insurance companies.					
Auditor's Follow Up Response	<i>We believe the department should revisit becoming a participating provider. County Ordinance 506-1991 authorizes the police department to accept reduced fees when the individual is insured through a contract or by operation of the applicable law which establishes a lesser fee benefit.</i>					
5	The AMTs and the AMTS performing clerical functions should be replaced by accounting assistant IIs, accounting assistant III s, police service aides or other appropriate civilian titles. In addition:					
	1. the AMTs performing time and leave functions should be replaced by accounting assistant IIs or another appropriate civilian title;					
	2. the AMT performing roll call functions should be replaced by a police service aide or another appropriate civilian title;					
	3. an accounting assistant III or another appropriate civilian title, who would have the requisite training in the important supervisory billing function, should replace the AMTS;					
	4. accounting assistant IIs or another appropriate civilian title, who would be better suited to perform clerical duties related to the billing function, replace the two AMTs; and					
	5. AMT personnel should be deployed to work exclusively in the delivery of emergency medical services.					
Auditor's Follow Up Response	<i>We found that the cost-benefit of civilianizing these positions is clear. Civilianization of the positions is a separate issue from a study of optimum staffing. The department should renew its request with the administration to civilianize these positions.</i>					
	<i>We recommend that the department reconsider its position that medical billing must be performed by an AMT supervisor. We believe that it is feasible for a civilian who is familiar with medical billing to perform this function and that the AMT Supervisor's special skills should be utilized in the delivery of emergency medical services.</i>					
6	Employees should sign in and out for themselves. We recommend the Bureau consider utilizing the county timesheet that requires an affirmative attestation of time worked by the administrative employees at the end of the pay period, as well as a daily initialing by a designated timekeeper to ensure the records are accurately maintained.					

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7	The CHIEF system should be updated or replaced with a system that can adequately meet the police department's needs, and will be able to track the various leave entitlements and events for both sworn and civilian employees. Employee records of time and leave should not be maintained manually when an electronic system exists and is being utilized. The deficiency in CHIEF was brought to the attention of the police department in our audit of the police department's Records, Information Services Bureau and Court Liaison Units, issued in October 2002. The county Accenture human resources/personnel reporting/time & leave project has identified the need to replace the CHIEF system, and this need will be addressed in the county's RFP for a new human resources/personnel reporting/time & leave system.					
8	The administration should take a proactive role in ensuring that a medical director for emergency services in Nassau County is appointed in order to be in compliance with NIH guidelines. A physician's involvement would enhance the Bureau's ability to keep informed as to the newest techniques and standards in emergency care.					
9	1. We recommend that the department provide First Responder recertification so that police officers remain current with emergency procedures and are in compliance with NYS Department of Health requirements.					
9	2. Only qualified teaching personnel, certified as instructors by NYS Department of Health, should be assigned to instructional duties at the Police Academy. All instructors acting in a teaching capacity should have appropriate credentials.					
	3. The teaching position should be evaluated to determine whether the six members of the Bureau on assignment to the Academy could be rotated back to duty within the Bureau and assigned on an as-needed basis.					
10	We recommend that:					
	• the Bureau consider reassigning the AMTCs presently assigned to the Police Academy and Police/Fire Academy back to the field; and					
	• adequate supervisory staff be assigned to the Medical Control Unit. We recommend that a supervisor currently performing clerical duties, such as billing, be reassigned to properly cover the workload of this important component of emergency medical care.					
11	The Police Department should evaluate the practice of having police officers drive ambulances and the cost benefit of hiring drivers, or additional AMTs who can double as drivers. The only requirement in New York State for driving an ambulance is a driver's license					
Auditor's Follow Up Response	<i>AMT's can also be knowledgeable about routes to the hospital. Police officers should not be precluded from driving the ambulances in extreme emergencies.</i>					
12	The Bureau should upgrade the technology used to communicate with the ambulance that is transporting a patient to the hospital. The Bureau should also ensure that it is provided with adequate backup, in case the primary unit is temporarily out of service.					